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BEHAVIOR PATTERNS ASSOCIATED WITH PERSISTENT EMOTIONAL DISTURBANCES OF SCHOOL CHILDREN IN REGULAR CLASSES OF ELEMENTARY GRADES. A REPORT OF A LONGITUDINAL STUDY OF CHILDREN IN THE SECOND GRADE IN 1961. INTERIM REPORT.

BY- MCCAFFREY, ISABEL CUMMING, JOHN
ONONDAGA COUNTY SCHOOL BOARDS ASSN., SYRACUSE, N.Y.

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IN 1961, 164 SECOND GRADE TEACHERS WERE INTERVIEWED REGARDING CLASSROOM BEHAVIOR OF THEIR PUPILS. THE TEACHERS DESCRIBED PUPILS WHO MIGHT BE CONSIDERED EMOTIONALLY DISTURBED, DESCRIBED PROBLEMS PRESENTED BY THESE PUPILS, AND SUGGESTED THE CONTRIBUTING OR COMPLICATING CONDITIONS. TWO ADDITIONAL FOLLOWUP SURVEYS OBTAINED SIMILAR INFORMATION FROM THIRD AND FOURTH GRADE TEACHERS IN 1963 AND FROM FIFTH AND SIXTH GRADE TEACHERS IN 1965. OF 2,035 BOYS AND 1,638 GIRLS, 308 BOYS AND 147 GIRLS WERE SUSPECTED OF BEING EMOTIONALLY DISTURBED IN TWO OR ALL THREE SURVEYS (BY TWO OR THREE TEACHERS OVER SPANS OF 2 OR 4 YEARS). FOR THE 39 GIRLS AND FOR 87 OF THE 92 BOYS, THE OVERALL BEHAVIOR PATTERN WAS DISTURBING AND ANNOYING ACTIVITY, SUGGESTING A SINGLE SYNDROME, WHICH APPEARED IN THREE PROBLEM AREAS (GROUP ASSOCIATION, INDIVIDUAL WORK PERFORMANCE, FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS). THE SYNDROME WAS CHARACTERIZED BY A MUTUAL ALIENATION OF THE CHILD AND THE SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT. THREE BEHAVIOR PATTERNS ASSOCIATED WITH THE SYNDROME OF DISTURBING AND ANNOYING ACTIVITY DIFFERED FOR BOYS AND GIRLS, PROBABLY BECAUSE OF THE INCREASED ACTIVITY AND LOWER ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT EXPECTED AMONG BOYS. THE CHILDREN WITH THIS SYNDROME TYPICALLY HAD RECEIVED THE MAXIMUM HELP WHICH THE SCHOOL COULD OFFER--EXTRA ATTENTION, REMEDIAL PROGRAMS, COUNSELING SERVICES, TRANSFER TO OTHER CLASSROOMS. SOME HAD RECEIVED PROFESSIONAL TREATMENT FROM OTHER SOURCES. A LACK OF ORGANIZED SERVICES AND RESOURCES IS NOTED. OTHER PAPERS WILL REPORT DATA ON CHILDREN WHO WERE IN GRADES 4 AND 6 IN 1961, AND IN JUNIOR AND SENIOR HIGH SCHOOLS IN 1965. (MM)

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Behavior Patterns

Associated with Persistent Emotional Disturbances of School Children in Regular Classes of Elementary Grades.

Onondaga County, New York

A report of a longitudinal study of children in the second grade in 1961.

MENTAL HEALTH RESEARCH UNIT

N. Y. STATE DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HYGIENE

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Preface

This study was instigated in 1960 by a committee of school administrators representing the School Boards Association of Onondaga County. They had become concerned because of the seemingly widespread impression that emotional disturbances in young children were being neglected in the schools. As school administrators, they were anxious to know how many children might be included in such a category, how they might be identified and what might be done by the schools to help them.

Initially the study received financial support from a grant made by the Community Mental Health Services Division of the New York State Department of Mental Hygiene to the Onondaga County School Boards Association. Continued support for the follow-up phases of the study has been received from NIMH Grant 01030 to the Mental Health Research Unit, New York State Department of Mental Hygiene, Syracuse, New York.

Substantial support also has been received from the schools. They arranged interview schedules, provided space and employed substitutes so that teachers might be released from classes while they were being interviewed.

Isabel McCaffrey [1] and John Cumming, M.D. [2] of the Mental Health Research Unit have served as principal investigators. Other members of the permanent research staff have included Carrie Conti, Ruth Dewey, Charles Eysaman, Patricia Healy, Rita Josef, Carol Murphy and Barbara Pausley. Others, too numerous to mention, also have made significant contribution to different phases of the study.

The project is being carried out under the general guidance of an advisory committee composed of representatives of various disciplines selected from the schools of Onondaga County. It includes E.H. Beebe (Chairman), Rieta Balmer, John Calvert, Mary Ellen Clark, Phillip J. Falise, Rose Giambronne, Arthur Hobday, Lee Rising, Harriet Rowell, and Theodore Stewart.

Special acknowledgment is made to the teachers, administrative, and other school personnel who have actively participated and supported the work of the research staff.

Special recognition also is given to Mr. E.H. Beebe, Superintendent of the West Genesee School District and one of the instigators of the study, who has supported the work of the research staff throughout all phases. This study could not have progressed without his continued interest and help.

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[1] Associate Research Scientist (Biostatistics), Mental Health Research Unit, New York State Department of Mental Hygiene, Syracuse, New York.

[2] Former Director of the Mental Health Research Unit currently engaged as Deputy Commissioner, New York State Department of Mental Hygiene, Albany, New York.

I. Population and Source of Data

Although one interim report has been made, this is the first in a series that will comprise the final account of a longitudinal study of children who were suspected of being emotionally disturbed and were enrolled in regular classes of elementary public schools of Onondaga County, exclusive of Syracuse City.

This section of the final report is concerned with the cohort of 2035 boys and 1838 girls who were in the second grade in 1961 when the study began and in the fifth or sixth grades at the time of the third survey in 1965 [1/] (Table 1). Subsequent reports in this series will deal with the cohorts of children who were in the fourth and sixth grades in 1961 and in Junior and Senior high schools in 1965.

The information for the study was obtained from confidential interviews with teachers. There were three waves of interviewing at two-year intervals (1961, 1963 and 1965). In each wave, all teachers of regular classes were asked to

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1/ When the study began in 1961, there were 2342 boys and 2067 girls enrolled in regular classes of the second grade of these schools (Table 1).

The cohort of 2035 boys and 1838 girls represents close to 90 per cent of the original population in the second grade when the study began in 1961. The remaining ten per cent were not available for follow-up study because they had moved to special classes, institutions, other schools or other areas.

Table 1

Number Described as Emotionally Disturbed According to Number in Cohort in 1961 and Number Available for Follow-up in 1963 and 1965

Year of follow-up	Number in cohort	Number described as emotionally disturbed							
			Number of times						
				Twice			Once		
		Total	Three times	1961 and 1963	1961 and 1965	1963 and 1965	1961	1963	1965
Total boys	2342	325	9	17	17	32	87	82	81
With follow-up	2035	308	9	17	17	32	70	82	81
1963 and 1965	1772	286	9*	15*	14*	32*	62	73	81
1963 only	236	19	-	2*	-	-	8*	9*	-
1965 only	27	3	-	-	3*	-	-	-	-
Without follow-up	307	17	-	-	-	-	17	-	-
Total girls	2067	155	1	9	3	9	43	49	41
With follow-up	1838	147	1	9	3	9	35	49	41
1963 and 1965	1607	126	1*	6*	2*	9*	27	41	40
1963 only	205	18	-	3*	-	-	7*	8*	-
1965 only	26	3	-	-	1*	-	1*	-	1*
Without follow-up	229	8	-	-	-	-	8	-	-

* Assembled and described in this report.

describe the children in their classes who might be considered emotionally disturbed; they also were asked to describe the problems presented by these children while in school and to suggest conditions that might be contributing to or complicating the problems.

Collating information relating to individual children from each of the three surveys served to identify 92 boys and 39 girls in the follow-up group who had been suspected of being emotionally disturbed over spans of two or more years -- or, in other words, labeled "emotionally disturbed" in more than one of the three waves of interviewing [1/] [2/] (Table 1).

1/ There also are included 17 boys and 17 girls who were in the second grade in 1961 and in regular classes again in 1963 or 1965, but not both, and were labeled "emotionally disturbed" only once. They are included in the group of 92 boys and 39 girls described in this report to minimize the chance of missing children who changed schools because of problems associated with their emotional disturbances.

2/ There are three possible labels a child might have been given in each survey; he might have been considered a "problem," but not "emotionally disturbed"; he might have been considered "emotionally disturbed"; or, he might have been considered "not a problem and not emotionally disturbed." The third, "not a problem and not emotionally disturbed," is a residual category including those who had not been named in either of the first two. There were only a few instances in which an emotionally disturbed child was not designated as a problem. Descriptions of behavior were not obtained unless a child was named as a problem and/or considered emotionally disturbed.

There are 27 possible combinations of labels that an individual child might receive from the three surveys. The most common was the one in which all three labels were in the residual category, "not a problem and not emotionally disturbed."

(continued on next page)

The narratives of the different teachers who made observations on the same children at different points in time (1961, 1963 and 1965) were then assembled into composite descriptions of each individual child. These composite pictures are the basis of the comprehensive behavior descriptions that are an integral part of this report.

The design of the project employed the following line of reasoning which is implicit in all of its operations:

1) The children who were most persistent in being regarded as emotionally disturbed are the ones most likely to have been in need of some kind of help over and above that received.

2/ (continued)
Changes in labels cannot be assumed to be indices of changes in behavior. They may reflect true differences in concepts, differences in perception, differences in teachers' ability to control, oversights in recording or oversights by teachers during the interview. In one school, changes in labels may reflect increasing resistance to the research by a principal who instructed the teachers to go through the motions of cooperating but to "tell nothing." Fortunately, this was one isolated instance and most school personnel cooperated whole-heartedly.

For these reasons, distinctions between long and short term emotional disturbances cannot be precisely defined statistically. It seems reasonable, however, to consider that children designated "emotionally disturbed" in at least two out of three surveys (or by two out of three teachers) may comprise a group of children who continued to act in such a way that most teachers would agree that they were emotionally disturbed and in need of help.

2) Comprehensive descriptions of behavior and complicating or contributing conditions may suggest kinds of help that could be offered to similar children who are emotionally disturbed and enrolled in regular classes.

II. Prevalence rates

Among the total cohort of 2035 boys and 1838 girls who were available for follow-up, there were 308 boys and 147 girls who were considered emotionally disturbed at least once in the course of the three surveys and were still in the school in 1963 and/or 1965. Those labeled more than once (92 boys and 39 girls) [1/] comprised 30 per cent of the 308 boys and 27 per cent of the 147 girls labeled at least once; or, 4.5 per cent of the cohort of 2035 boys and 2.1 per cent of the cohort of 1838 girls who were available for follow-up. These percentages should not be confused with community prevalence rates. They refer only to children who remained in regular classes of the public schools and do not include children in special classes, special schools or institutional settings or children exempt from school because of emotional disturbances.

1/ See footnote 1/ on page 2.

III. The Basic Syndrome of Problems and Behavior Patterns

The descriptions to follow pertain to behavior in classroom settings and do not necessarily correspond to clinical diagnoses. They provide a comprehensive view of a type of classroom behavior that teachers of regular classes observed and associated with emotional disturbances of children in their classes. Difficulties in understanding the significance of incidence and prevalence rates of mental illnesses and emotional maladjustments in school children have been described and have been attributed by authors such as White and Harris not only to differences in instruments, criteria and types of populations studied, but also to the lack of such comprehensive pictures of overall behavior patterns [1/]. The overall behavior patterns of all 39 girls and 87, or all but five of the 92 boys [2/], had a common basic structure of disturbing and annoying activity, suggesting a single syndrome that assumes different forms under different sets of conditions, just as normal behavior may be expected to be different for boys

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1/ Cong, Morse and Newman. Conflict in the Classroom: The Education of Emotionally Disturbed Children. Wadsworth Publishing Company, Inc. Belmont, California, 1965. Reprinted from: The School Psychologist by Mary Alice White and Myron W. Harris. Harper and Row, 1961.

2/ The five boys whose behavior did not fit this syndrome were described as physically slow and inactive.

and girls and to vary under different conditions. The syndrome appeared in conjunction with a set or combination of problems in three major areas: (a) group associations, (b) individual work performance, and (c) family relationships.

A. Three Problem Areas

1. Association with class

The behavior of this group of 87 boys and 39 girls caused problems for both teachers and classmates because it included a type of activity (such as speaking out, moving about, making noises and interrupting) that was a constant source of annoyance, disturbance or distraction to the class. The disturbing children, however, also were said: (a) to disassociate themselves and withdraw from class participation and group activities, or (b) to be isolated because members of the class disassociated themselves from the disturbing child from fear of getting into trouble or from dislike and resentment of interruptions, or (c) to be left out usually because of a lack of ability in some area of functioning. In short, the disturbing activities of these children apparently were unrelated to the organized program of the class and the children sometimes were described as loners, non-conformists, complete deviates or as children who would, for example, rather read than participate. One teacher aptly summarized her description with "He is not a team player."

The disturbing aspects of the behavior (talking, moving about, interrupting, etc.) were attributed by teachers to nervousness, short attention spans, inability to sit still, inability to concentrate; or the children were described as erratic, fidgety, restless, moody, impulsive, inconsistent, high strung or easily upset. Although frequently said to be "attention getting" or "attention seeking," they seldom were linked to attempts to assume group roles. When specific purposes were mentioned, as will be seen later, they usually indicated a child's need to have his own way or to somehow set himself apart from the group. Examples are "wanting to be first" or "pushing others out of the way."

That the children could not help but act in these disturbing ways seems implicit in the choice of words used to explain these activities. Expressions such as "can't sit still" suggest that the children had little control over their disturbing habits. It also seems possible that the children could not, rather than would not, respond favorably to the control measures employed by both teachers and classmates. It seemed to the research staff as if the children often did not know that they had been doing anything out of order and considered criticisms and corrections as personal affronts and, therefore, cause for complaints.

2. Individual work performance

Failure to work up to one's full potential was generally characteristic of this group of children. Problems for the teacher

included inattentiveness, messiness, disinterest, dislike for school, unfinished work, giving up, refusing to do work, working only when interested, doing nothing, and failure to see the value of school. Practices and attitudes such as these may be expected to lead to unsatisfactory academic grades and subsequent non-promotion with separation from the peer group. It is not surprising, therefore, that non-promotion and/or performance below the class average was approximately twice as common among the emotionally disturbed children in this group (two out of three boys and one out of two girls) as among the total cohort of second grade children (one out of three boys and one out of five girls) with whom the study started in 1961. It also stands to reason that academic failure with its loss of dignity and expulsion from the peer group may (1) intensify problems in other areas, and (2) affect the overall behavior pattern of an individual child.

School failure appears as an important element in the emergence of different behavior patterns but it cannot, for three reasons, be an adequate or consistent screening device for selecting and identifying children with persistent emotional disturbances of the type described here. In the first place, failure is not a universal characteristic and it would miss a large part of the group described here. In the second place, there is a large body of children who experienced failure in the elementary grades but were not considered emotionally disturbed at any time during the course of this study; therefore, many false positives would be picked up in the screening process.

In the third place, the length of time that it may take a child to arrive at a point where he can no longer "get by" with passing grades might be expected to vary according to innate ability. This group of children ran the full gamut with respect to academic capacities. It included children who were thought to be retarded, as well as children who were thought to have average IQ's and children who were thought to be exceptionally bright. Since the lag between poor individual performance and actual failure might be expected to vary accordingly, it stands to reason that school failure, in itself, could not be a consistently early indicator of the complex of problems presented by this group of children. It would tend to pick up the less capable children at a much earlier age than those who are smart enough to neglect their work and still meet the requirements for promotion.

3. Family relationships

Comments of teachers in describing the problems presented by this group of emotionally disturbed children almost always included references to one or the other of two types of conditions, both of which suggest inadequate home resources for help and support. The first was one in which the teachers described a lack of supervision, lack of discipline or lack of control in the home attributed to reasons such as "no time," "preoccupation," "no interest," "working mothers," "incompetence," "different value systems," "lack of father influence," "spoiling," or

"pampering." The second was one in which a parent, usually the mother, was described as "nervous," "quick tempered," "impatient," "hostile," "excessive in restrictions," "excessive in demands" for academic achievement; or there were excessive home responsibilities or there was some conflict suggesting a strain in family relationships.

Words such as "lack of understanding," "rejection," "resentment," "overprotection," "frustration," "at wit's end," "sibling favoritism" seemed to have little significance in themselves; they might indicate abandonment with lack of supervision, interest and help or they might suggest conflict in the relationship of a child to his parents or other members of the family. Therefore, the intent of words such as these had to be evaluated in their contexts and they do not appear here in association with either type of home condition.

Home problems of each kind were reported in association with many different types of home situations. They were reported for families with many children as well as one-child families where the child might either "be left alone too much" or "given too much attention"; families in which parents were old; intact families as well as foster homes and families in which one or both parents were missing, hospitalized or out of the home at odd hours because of work; poor families with substandard housing and food as well as families that had everything.

In each situation, however, the common problem to the teacher seemed to be inadequate or inappropriate outside help in schoolwork or in maintaining other supportive or corrective roles. In some

instances, the home problems seemed to be ones in which the families not only failed to provide supports but also promoted feelings of inadequacy and destroyed confidence.

Another common characteristic has been suggested in the teachers' accounts of complications in the homes of these children: on the one hand, there seemed to have been an almost total lack of assignment to the child of a defined individual family role under authoritative control; or, on the other hand, there seemed to have been excessive control and the assignment of a role too difficult for the child to fulfill. In the first instance, perhaps too little had been expected of the individual child; in the second, too much had been expected. The common factor, however, is that many of these children seem to have had little satisfactory experience in functioning or conforming as a part of a group outside of school.

Another somewhat different complicating factor concerned the family's relationship to the school and centered on the difficulty encountered in trying to reach parents for conferences. The home and work responsibilities of many parents often made it impossible for them to come to school to discuss the needs of their children; others, who did come, sometimes were critical and blamed the school or resented any seeming criticism of their children; and others felt that it was a school problem in which they had no responsibility. The teachers frequently said that conferences with parents did not seem productive in specific ways, although they sometimes did help in understanding the child and his behavior.

It was not suggested, for the most part, that the parents were willfully irresponsible, negligent or demanding. On the contrary, the interview records suggested that many parents of the children in this group were hard-working and doing their best within the limits of their temperaments, abilities or other responsibilities.

B. Three Variations in Behavior Patterns

We turn now to the behavior patterns associated with the annoying and disturbing activity and sets of problems in the three areas of functioning described in the preceding section. All but five boys and five girls were classified according to one of three variations of behavior patterns, each of which corresponded to a particular combination of problems [1/] (Table 2). These patterns were different for boys and girls, although patterns of girls seem to parallel those of boys if allowances are made for increased activity and lower academic achievement usually expected among boys as compared to girls.

1. First behavior pattern (40 boys and 13 girls)

Among boys, the most frequently encountered behavior pattern was one generally based on a combination of (1) academic failure, frequently but not necessarily associated with average ability, (2) disassociation from the class by non-conforming or by being

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1/ The five boys and girls were unclassified with respect to behavior pattern because of insufficient information.

Table 2

Number of Children Classified According to Specific Behavior Patterns

Behavior pattern [1]	Total	Academic Performance	
		Passing	Failing [2]
Total boys with syndrome	87	28	59
First	40	3	37
Second	23	3	20
Third	19	18	1
Unclassified	5	4	1
Total girls with syndrome	39	22	17
First	13	1	12
Second	5	1	4
Third	16	16	-
Unclassified	5	4	1

[1] See text for descriptions; pages 12, 13, 14, 15, 16 and 17.

[2] Held back in some grade between 1961 and 1965 and/or performing below the class average in 1965.

disliked by classmates, and (3) spoiling, babying or lack of supervision and control in the home, frequently because of other demands upon the mothers' time.

In school, the non-conforming behavior was explained with words or phrases that seemed to signify a desire on the part of the child to be set apart from the group as a whole. Examples of such phrases included "wants own way" (so stated or suggested in "stubborn" or "rebellious"), "wants to take over," "wants to be first," "showing off," "bragging," "tattling," "overbearing." Physical aggressiveness suggested by "bullying," "belligerence," "meanness" or "hostility" also were found as frequent components of this behavior pattern.

It has been proposed in an earlier report of this study, that the emotionally disturbed child in school is seen by teachers as one who has a feeling of personal discomfort in being present in the class and that this discomfort is something felt by the child, in contrast to the types of problem behavior which are bothersome only to the child's peers and/or teacher and do not seem to worry or disturb the child himself [1/]. In the behavior pattern of boys described here, signs of such discomfort felt by the child in the classroom setting are found in teachers' descriptions of feelings of persecution, resentment, anger, inability to take criticism, loss of temper, pouting, sulking, staying in the bathroom and withdrawing.

1/ Interim Report No. 1.

The teachers do not as a rule attribute these feelings of discomfort to specific causes and one's first inclination might be to regard them as reactions to non-acceptance and dislike by classmates. It also seems possible, however, that they are expressions of protest against the total classroom situation. The latter, in particular, seems reasonable when it is considered that conformity to the structure of the classroom probably is in conflict with the upbringing of these boys who frequently were said "to have been left on their own," "to have had their own way" or "to have done as they pleased" in their homes.

Unlike boys, the parallel pattern of girls is not the predominant one. It includes only slow learners; it does not include girls with average ability who were failing. The thirteen girls who had (1) experienced academic failure between the second and sixth grades, (2) were disliked by their classmates, and (3) came from homes where control, help and support were lacking, however, were described as "busybodies," "overbearing," "tomboys," "boisterous," "mean," "pushing," "lying," "stealing" or "hitting." Among girls these activities were not attributed to bullying, showing-off or bragging, as in the case of the boys. As a rule, the girls in this group came from poor home situations including sub-standard living conditions, placement in foster home, poor morals or intellectual incompetence. Feelings of discomfort are suggested in their complaints of unhappiness, feeling unliked and feeling unwanted.

The difference in the number of boys (40) and girls (13) seems to be due to the fact that this behavior pattern includes a group of boys who were failing although they were capable of doing average work and also lacked attention at home because of pressure of other demands upon the time of their mothers. Hypotheses to explain the absence of a parallel group of girls have not yet been formulated, although it is a temptation to do so because they might lead to a better understanding of the reasons for the common observation that relatively more boys than girls are considered emotionally disturbed.

2. Second behavior pattern (23 boys and 5 girls)

The second behavior pattern of both boys and girls also was based upon a problem structure that usually included academic failure. In this behavior pattern, however, both boys and girls had less than average ability and were not expected to perform at the class level.

Boys were "left out," "considered odd," "considered dumb" or ridiculed"; they also lacked discipline at home because of babying, spoiling or overprotection. Overt activities in school seemed lacking in direction and were described as silliness, mischievousness, fooling or dependency.

Girls were overtly more quiet during class than were the boys; they were withdrawn, preoccupied, unresponsive, although likely to be talkative, fooling behind the teacher's back or running around just like other girls when they were outside of class.

Boys were described as self-conscious, lacking confidence or lacking self-reliance; girls were described as shy. These feelings of inadequacy and timidity also suggest a kind of discomfort, although complaints of unfair treatment are not reported as in the first behavior pattern described above. Perhaps the boys and girls included in this behavior pattern lacked the confidence to complain -- or perhaps the recognition of their lack of ability saved them from pressures to conform at the group level.

3. Third behavior pattern (19 boys and 17 girls)

This is the only pattern in which there were almost as many girls as boys. The problem structure of both boys and girls consisted of (1) passing grades and promotion, although boys in particular were problems to their teachers because they were not performing according to their ability (some were thought to have exceptional ability), (2) disassociation from the class with "daydreaming," "acting as if in a daze," "withdrawing," "turning inward," "introversion," "malingering," "absenteeism," or "self-isolation," and (3) difficult family relations, conflicts or parental characteristics; families included parents (usually mothers) who were "nervous," "flighty," "emotionally upset," "old," "impatient," "ambitious," "short tempered," "unduly restrictive," "overattentive," "worried," "at the end of their wits," "uncooperative" or "hostile" -- or, there was some conflict in home such as

sibling rivalry, religious differences, marital difficulties or problems with relatives over supervision and care. Teachers did not imply, however, that home problems were the cause of the emotional disturbances.

In school, boys were "contrary," "unruly," "stubborn," "overbearing," "inconsiderate" or "complete deviates"; girls were "bossy," "wanted to run things," "wanted to lead" or were "hard to get along with." These kinds of behavior sound very much like the behavior in the first pattern described above except for the connotations of physical roughness and complaints of persecution and mistreatment noted in the first pattern. Poor coordination, obesity or small size sometimes were reported in conjunction with this third pattern but teachers did not seem to directly attribute the behavior or emotional problems to physical problems such as these. Signs of discomfort, however, were found in "tantrums," "crying," "inability to take criticism," "feeling unliked," "feeling left out," "feeling depressed," "feeling inferior," "feeling unhappy," "lacking confidence" and "lacking assurance," but the children in this group were not said to feel persecuted, picked on or complaining.

IV. Summary and Discussion

This report has described a syndrome associated with persistent labeling of emotional disturbances in a group of 87 boys and 39 girls. The group with this syndrome has been assembled from a cohort of 2035 boys and 1838 girls who were in the regular classes of the second grade in Onondaga County exclusive of Syracuse in 1961. The cohort was followed at two-year intervals ending in 1965.

The syndrome is characterized by disturbing types of activity in conjunction with what might be called a mutual alienation of child and school environment. It is referred to as a syndrome because the behavior and complicating or contributing conditions run together in such a way that no single attribute or characteristic seems sufficiently descriptive in itself to be useful.

The comprehensive description of the syndrome has been extracted from confidential interviews with teachers of the elementary grades. It represents the thinking of a large number of teachers of regular classes in a diversified geographic area including 17 administrative districts. The study involved 164 teachers of the second grade in 1961. Third grade as well as fourth grade teachers were involved in the 1963 follow-up; and, fifth as well as sixth grade teachers were involved in the 1965 follow-up.

Perhaps the most significant feature and potential contribution of this study is not so much in statistics and prevalence rates as in the teachers' comprehensive descriptions of the behavior patterns assumed by the syndrome. This was not an easy task for the teachers because they were asked to supply their own definitions, concepts and words in responding to the interview questions. Moreover, necessary time limits on the interviews did not permit the teachers to organize their thoughts or grope for the "right words." It seems reasonable, however, to think that the behavior and contributing or complicating conditions associated with persistent emotional disturbances in regular classes should fit into a limited number of denotable patterns with common characteristics and that the delineation of these patterns should be a logical first step in considering ways in which emotionally disturbed school children can be helped.

In pursuing the analyses of the interview records with such an objective in mind, it soon became apparent that the usual research procedures with precise coding and the use of machines or other techniques for sorting and classification could not be used in this study. Judgments on individual bases had to be made by the research staff in interpreting the intent and meaning of words and phrases within the total context. Interview records sometimes were re-read several times by different members of the staff to make sure that all possible meanings were

considered and to determine the significance of different meanings or omissions in the total picture of an individual child's behavior in school. For example, "tantrums," "resentment," "feelings of persecution," "feeling unwanted," "feeling disliked," "complaining" or "whining" were often thought to suggest feelings of personal affront or unjust treatment; sulking and pouting sometimes seemed to be ways of withdrawing as well as connoting resentment; and, under some circumstances, stubbornness, defiance and rebellion were all thought to be different ways of saying that a child wanted his own way. For these reasons, the allocation of an individual child's behavior to a single pattern sometimes presented difficulties but, on the whole, the behavior pattern emerged with remarkable clarity.

An important concept in this study is the implicit assumption that the children with persistent emotional disturbances are those most in need of some kind of help over and above that already received. A total of 455 of the children who were available for follow-up were designated as "emotionally disturbed" in at least one of the three waves of interviewing. Approximately three-fourths, however, were only one-shot affairs in the sense that they were so designated only once. It is outside the scope of this study to evaluate the mechanisms by which the emotional problems of three-fourths of the children had become resolved but it is reasonable to think that the schools played an important part.

The particular syndrome with which this report is concerned, however, has persisted in a sizeable group of children in spite of the time and efforts of school personnel and the use of resources available to them. The interview records indicate that the children for whom this syndrome is described had been given a great deal of extra attention, support and encouragment; they had had remedial programs, counseling services to parents as well as children; attempts had been made to find other class settings where the children might find relief from their discomforts; and, some who came to school unkempt or hungry were given showers and supplements of food and clothing. In short, the interview records suggest that the schools had tried everything within their power, had reached the point where they did not know what else to do and concluded that nothing could help except something outside of school (such as a "new family" or psychiatric help). In the meantime, the teachers had them in their classes to deal with in the best way that they could.

The children who had this syndrome were not wholly without private professional treatment. A few are reported to have been attending child guidance clinics; others had been seeing psychiatrists and some are said to have been under medication presumably prescribed by their physicians. The teachers, however, who usually are considered significant adult influences in the life of a child, did not seem to know much about what was being done under private auspices nor did they seem to be included in any therapeutic plan.

In planning possible ways in which these children might be helped, it may be useful to consider some of the possible reasons for the persistence of this syndrome in a sizeable number of children in spite of the extra attention and services that have been directed to the problems of individual children. In the first place, it is suggested that a number of sufficient size for description and identification could not be assembled and the relative importance of the syndrome in terms of the number of children affected could not be determined without investigating a large population such as that included in this study. The cohort of 3873 boys and girls who were followed and from which this group of 126 children has been assembled presumably represents one-sixth of the total public elementary school population of Onondaga County exclusive of Syracuse. Even six times 126, or approximately 750, would be a relatively small number if it is scattered between boys and girls, among three variations in behavior patterns and among some sixty schools. Under these circumstances, the children with this syndrome might fail to attract attention as a sizeable group requiring special consideration and attention because only a small number would be seen and recognized in any one place. Secondly, it is suggested that most services seem to be traditionally directed to selected segments of a population (such as the underpriviliged or disadvantaged); or, they are focused on a specific single problem area (such as speech, reading,

hyperactivity or delinquency). Moreover, both professional and lay literature, to which one might turn for understanding and guidance, seems to be concerned with selected signs or symptoms (such as withdrawal, inattentiveness, paranoia, learning blocks); and privately arranged clinical services seem to be carried out independent of other potential resources for help and influence. This departmentalization of aids and guidance might be expected to separate the syndrome into parts so that it is no longer recognizable as a syndrome with special kinds of problems and needs.

Both of these reasons suggest difficulties in recognizing the total complex of problems commonly associated with the syndrome, as well as failure to recognize its relative importance in terms of numbers of children affected. The descriptions provided by the teachers will tend to overcome some of these difficulties. It is suggested that it also would be difficult, however, to coordinate segmented services and resources, as described above, to meet the total complex of problems associated with the syndrome. Perhaps the fault lies not so much in the lack of appropriate kinds of help for these children as in the lack of an organization of services and resources to facilitate their affective use.